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## THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION.

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The forty-third annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was held this year in Brooklyn. At this meeting an important step was taken towards organizing a new section in the Association, namely, "Section J—Geography." Heretofore, all papers pertaining to geography have been included in Section E, which is specially devoted to Geology. In accordance with the Constitution, a new section cannot be formed unless proposed at one meeting and voted upon at the next annual meeting. The following proposed amendments were offered to the Council by Mr. Gardiner G. Hubbard: "To change Article 22 by omitting in the name of Section E the term 'Geography' and by inserting in the list of sections a new section entitled 'J—Geography.'" This proposed amendment will be acted upon at the meeting of 1895, and the successful organization of "Section J" will doubtless depend largely upon the number and importance of geographical papers offered at that meeting.

Only a small number of papers were presented this year, but the members interested in the formation of this section are hopeful that all the leading students of geography in the country will realize the importance of joining the Association as the best means of advancing and diffusing a knowledge of their chosen study.

Professor J. W. Powell of the Bureau of Ethnology

presented a paper on the "Water Resources of the United States." He considers that the ultimate development of the United States depends mainly upon the thorough utilization of the water resources. The vast fertile lands in the West cannot be utilized for homes for the people except by artificial irrigation. In the more thickly settled portions of the United States the water resources are of equal importance for power and for municipal and domestic supply. As the sources of supply are limited, there is urgent need of exercising much thought and skill to employ them to the best advantage. In all cases, Mr. Powell declares, the proper solution of the problem rests upon a correct knowledge of the distribution and fluctuation of the available waters. This study is now being carried on by the United States Geological Survey, and one of the first results is a preliminary map of the *run-off*, prepared in a form similar to that of the ordinary map of mean annual rainfall.

Mr. F. H. Newell, of the United States Geological Survey, dealt with the subject of "The National Domain,"—the settlement of the vacant public lands under the homestead law. He made the statement that the United States now own about one-third of the total area of the country, excluding Alaska. This land is now open to settlement, but the progress of actual occupation is slow, owing to the difficulties in the way of creating farms. These difficulties are numerous and are chiefly due to climatic conditions, and in a measure also to geologic and topographic peculiarities. In the East the mountainous, rocky or marshy character of the land retards settlement, and in the West the lack of

water makes it difficult if not impossible. Owing to the pressure for homes, however, this land is continually being taken up, and there is consequently much suffering and hardship among the settlers. Nine-tenths of all the vacant public lands, according to Mr. Newell, are in the arid and sub-humid region extending from about the one-hundredth meridian to the Pacific Coast. The remaining portions are in the Southern States and in those of the Mississippi Valley, notably Arkansas and Louisiana. The speaker illustrated the relative location, extent and disposal of these vacant lands by maps and diagrams.

Mr. Gardiner G. Hubbard read a paper on the "Geographical Development of China, Korea and Japan." He called attention to the natural features and the climatic conditions of Eastern Asia as having exerted a marked influence upon the races of mankind in that region. The fertile soil and mild climate, and the bordering mountains are all favorable to rapid and luxuriant development of animal and vegetable life. Primitive man, Mr. Hubbard believes, found these environments favorable, the climate congenial, and food, shelter and clothing easy of access. He therefore developed rapidly in this region and increased wonderfully in population, thus bringing about migrations to less favored portions of the world. The environment was, however, too favorable for a very high development, and consequently culture and intellectual progress stopped after reaching a certain stage. "The culture status of the Orient remains therefore between the Primitive and the Advanced."